

## URBAN MANAGEMENT– CURRENT STRATEGIC APPROACHES

### **Abstract**

In recent years urban management conceptual evolutions are more and more connected to the changes in public administration practice, in particular to ways of raising efficiency and effectiveness. The interest shared by a great number of stakeholders regarding urban development, the increasing role of environment issues and the need for a broad vision for managing cities, are all premises required for a strategic approach to urban management performance. The paper presents some relevant issues related to urban management studies: the dynamics of the concept, missions and goals, strategic options. The results of the research indicate that the action directions required to obtain satisfactory levels of efficiency and effectiveness in urban management are: developing a strong habitation policy, locating economic activities, developing public equipment and planning urban transport.

**Keywords:** urban management, strategic options, planning, habitation, urban transport, public equipment

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# MANAGEMENTUL URBAN – ABORDĂRI ACTUALE LA NIVEL STRATEGIC

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### **Rezumat**

Evoluțiile conceptuale ale managementului urban din ultimii ani sunt legate de transformările practicii administrației publice în privința modalităților de creștere a eficienței și eficacității acesteia. Interesul unui număr mare de actori în ceea ce privește dezvoltarea urbană, rolul crescând al problemelor de mediu și necesitatea unui viziuni mai largi în gestionarea orașului reprezintă premise necesare în demersul strategic de amplificare a performanței managementului urban. Lucrarea prezintă câteva aspecte relevante referitoare la preocupările actuale în studiul managementului urban: dinamica acestui concept, misiunile și obiectivele, opțiunile strategice. Rezultatele acestei cercetări indică faptul că direcțiile de acțiune de urmat pentru atingerea unui nivel satisfăcător de eficiență și eficacitate a managementului urban sunt: dezvoltarea unei politici robuste în domeniul locuirii, localizarea activităților economice, realizarea echipamentelor publice și planificarea transporturilor urbane.

**Cuvinte cheie:** management urban, opțiuni strategice, planificare, habitat, transport urban, echipament public

## 1. URBAN MANAGEMENT – CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENTS

The concept of urban management emerged in the late 80s in the developed countries and has represented the end of at least three promoted ideas by then:

- Firstly, local authorities were responsible only for water supply and sewage systems. Economic development, environment and poverty had to be city's urban manager's responsibilities
- Secondly, urban managers could no longer rely on central government involvement and could not require additional financial resources from it
- Finally, the traditional plan (the Master plan) could no longer be the most important tool used in planning.

Before defining urban management, **three premises** are worth pointing out (Popescu, 2009):

- Firstly, we must consider the interest of a large number of actors in terms of urban development: residents, projects coordinators, other cities, public-private partnerships, economic agents, savings institutions and financial organizations.
- Secondly, environmental issues that cities are facing should not be neglected, as they often influence a much wider area. Environmental issues have become increasingly serious and researches directed on the links between urban and rural environment leads to identify areas affected by urban pollution. Environmental issues have become increasingly serious and directed researches on links between urban and rural areas leads to identify areas affected by pollution. Environmental problems are typical problems of urban management and they cannot be solved out by a single department. For example, air pollution due to intensive use of cars, requires specific legislation on car and fuel use, but also a developing alternative travel means, and a public information campaign.
- Thirdly, urban management requires a lot more than the traditional plan. It is necessary to develop a wider vision on the direction the city is heading.

Considering these aspects, urban management can be defined in various ways:

- Urban Management is „the effort to coordinate and integrate public and private actions, equally, in order to solve major problems which residents are confronting and to create a more competitive, profitable and more sustainable city” (van Dijk, 2000). Competitiveness can be improved by an exercise of strategic planning and operational programs.

- Urban management is "the development process, execution, coordination and evaluation of integrated strategies- with help from other relevant urban actors, corroborated with the purposes of public sector and public interest in government policies - in order to identify, create and use the potential for a sustainable economic development" (Bramezza and van Klink, 1994).
- Urban management is „the activity which attempts to mobilize various resources in order to make them act in a cooperative manner in the planning, programming, setting and implementation of budgets, in order to achieve the development goals of the city”(Davidson, 1996).

Urban management can also be defined, as „ a subcategory of the local government management, in the sense that it refers to those local entities which are defined as municipalities. A city has the following features: a defined area of clear administrative boundaries; *predominantly urban character; management is performed by a body of elected local officials, subject of the jurisdiction of a higher government bodies (province or/and state).*

Urban management is a comprehensive paradigm for the development and governance of urban settlements, whether they are small cities or metropolitan areas.

Urban management is a „modus operandi”, relating both with instant tasks, and also with long-term planning, the decision-making process, the quest for consensus, with good management and continuous adaptation of direction for the development of municipal area as a physical entity, as well as social and economic development activities that support its existence and nature of its growth, for the wellbeing of all its residents.

Urban management is the way in which government, in its restrictive interpretation, can be transposed into a sustainable and participatory development (Report of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements, 1993).

World Bank, in cooperation with the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements promote these two approaches through Urban Management Program.

The main objective is to improve performance in key areas of infrastructure planning, financing, land management and environmental management.

Demand for infrastructure investment programs, indicates that physical plans are not sufficient and they need a framework to link the physical investment and institutions.

The World Bank and the United Nations Development Program have also promoted the concept that refers to cities as engines of economic development so that economic development should be seen as a key objective of urban development, and urban management is an essential condition.

Common to all definitions set forth is that urban management (figure 1) requires "a level of decision making and organizational structure (the question WHO?) that can coordinate the relevant urban actors, to formulate and implement a development strategy (question WHY?), using the tools at its disposal (question HOW?).

| WHO  | Decision level | → | Organizational structure  |
|------|----------------|---|---|
| WHAT | Strategy       | → | Audit<br>Vision<br>Policies<br>Action plan<br>Monitoring/evaluation |
| HOW  | Instruments    | → | Strategic planning<br>Urban marketing<br>Urban financing            |

FIGURE 1. – URBAN MANAGEMENT SCHEME  
(Source: Racoviceanu, 2002)

## 2. CURRENT OBJECTIVES AND MISSIONS OF URBAN MANAGEMENT

Urban management has 4 specific missions (Chaline, 1999):

- spatial planning;
- animation of the city;
- organization of solidarity;
- ensuring the security of goods and people.

These missions are interdependent, their relationship with the main activities developed in urban areas are presented in the table below:

TABLE NO. 1. – RELATIONSHIP MISSION / ACTIVITIES IN URBAN MANAGEMENT

| <b>Mission<br/>Activity</b> | <b>Arrangement</b>  | <b>Animation</b>  | <b>Solidarity</b>   | <b>Security</b>                                   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Education                   | School Implantation   | Extracurricular and school life   | Education access for everyone   | Safety of students, buildings                     |
| Road infrastructure         | Facilitating access   | Achieving a balance in neighborhoods                                    | Encouraging exchanges between individuals and groups                    | Quality equipment                                 |
| Environment                 | Balancing spaces  | Animation of green areas or activity centers                            | Providing green spaces in all areas and access for everyone             | Ensuring water quality, air, and waste collection |
| Transport                   | Facilitating communication between neighborhoods or between different poles of urban life | Incitement to use public transport                                      | Facilitating the movement of a large enough number of people            | Compliance with the safety of persons and goods   |
| Economic Development        | Balancing activity zones and areas with green spaces                                      | Maintaining proximity trade activities, and implantation of enterprises | Encouraging the creation of new enterprises in order to create new jobs | Combating pollution and risks for the population  |
| Culture, sport, leisure     | Equipment closer to users   | Encouraging events  | Opening access to a large number of people                              | Protection areas and compliance                   |

Urban management, in the fulfillment process of its missions, must achieve three categories of objectives (figure 2).

- a. Urban management aims to increase the economic wealth of the city and better allocation of resources, thanks to a will to ensure the regularity of their flow and their efficient distribution. In this case, urban management needs to establish the optimal size of the city and its equipment, beyond which additional costs exceed the additional earnings. This way of putting the problem can be transferred also on the services provided by the city:
  - What types of transport should be provided taking into account the development prospects of the city, the spatial distribution of current and future population, predictable movements?
  - How can residences, schools and green areas problem can be solved out?
  - How can the water supply, sewage, waste collection and treatment can be ensured?

- Which are the conditions required to make cities an attractive area for investors, for new enterprises implantation?

In essence, urban management concerns spatial planning as a means of economic development.

Social objectives of urban management refers to maximizing social contact and avoiding segregation due to economic, geographical, social or racial issues. It is known, for example, the situation of the inhabitants of the suburbs or even some areas from large cities. In this sense the objective is to restore social links among citizens.

Urban management also has a series of aesthetic objectives. Urban space is an output of "production process" managed by the institution-city. Those who rule the city are responsible for promoting a particular landscape-capital. By this phrase we understand the quality of architecture, the city plan readability, the convenience movement, the animation of central areas, etc. It is therefore their duty, in order to achieve an urban aesthetic, to impose a code of rules of urbanism and architecture which must be respected by everyone.

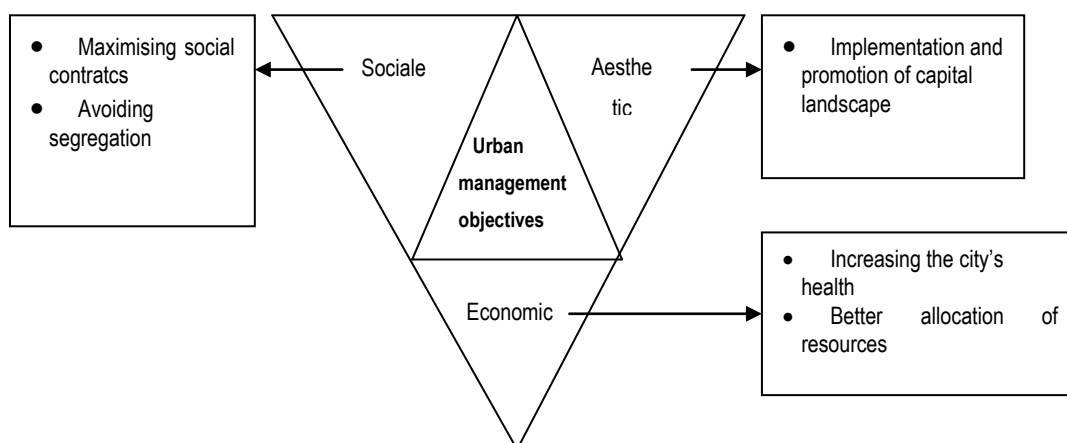


FIGURE NO. 2. - URBAN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (1993) identified 3 objectives of urban management:

- Improvement of Living and Working Conditions for all city residents, especially for disadvantaged groups;
- Enhancing and protecting the physical environment.

The three categories of objectives influence each other. Quality of life, particularly disadvantaged groups of citizens cannot be improved while the municipality fails to promote productive investment, employment and income generation.

Growth prospects are discouraged by inefficient infrastructure and urban services, and also by low productivity due to poor health conditions of residents; meanwhile damage to the physical environment has disastrous consequences not only on public health but also on the municipality's ability to provide social and economic development and also to act as a magnet for attracting foreign investment strategies, who relies increasingly more on the physical environment attractiveness and the efficient operation of infrastructure and services.

### 3. STRATEGIC OPTIONS OF URBAN MANAGEMENT

#### 3.1. *Habitat*

Housing policy is to determine quantitative and qualitative needs, and on this basis, the setting of house types and in particular the financing of their implementation.

Traditionally, house programming is based on the relationship:

**One family = A nuclear household (parents and children) = One home**

Needs anticipation it's based on demographic development prospects (method consists in forecasting population by age and sex structure and application of a constant or evolving marriage rate) minus the number of households.

To determine the number of houses that need to be constructed the following variables are taken into account:

- housing demolitions and transformations (for example, offices buildings) ;
- number of young married couples living together with their parents (cohabitation of secondary cores);
- number of free houses (housing stock flow);
- the need for secondary residences (for example, holiday homes) or temporary.

Regarding the evolving needs on housing quality, we witness the following trends:

- increasing divorce rate, which increases demand for housing;
- increasing the proportion of unmarried couples;
- multiplication of single-parent families;

- young people wish to leave early from family home;
- retired people tend to want to keep home;
- the desire to have residential properties.

Increasing family instability, for example, leads to using rented apartments, located as close as possible to relatives in order to benefit from their help.

When housing demand pressure is reduced, in housing choice interferes a number of subjective factors, that forecasting methods do not take into consideration: the neighborhood, details of planning, finishes quality, planning details, sellers skills, etc.

Regarding housing finance, government intervention has an important role. We distinguish three types of support on his part:

- “Stone support”- is to facilitate housing construction and it takes the form of subsidies (prime for house building), tax deductions and favorable loans (reduction of interest rate, long term repayment, significant percentage in the total cost of the house). Homes financed this way are known as social housing.
- “Aid to person ”- is intended to the occupant of a house in order for him/her to buy it, or modest-income residents which are encouraged this way to purchase cheaper and individual homes, on the city's suburbs. In France, this type of help is called „custom help for ANL buildings”. It's main disadvantage is that it doesn't encourage the renewal and expansion of housing stock.
- “Support for custom stone ”, depends on family status and economic stakeholders. The level of this aid is calculated on the basis of some scales that take into account levels of housework, family composition, rent paid (and some maintenance costs) and "percentage of effort" -part of the revenue considered suitable to be assigned to the housing costs (usually 15-20%). The advantage of this system is that it allows the request of a non-segregation housing fund, as well as the aid accommodation to the beneficiary's situation.

### **3.2. Location of economic activities**

Urban management is also concerned by the location of activities:

- to ensure a quantitative and qualitative balance between resident population and jobs offer;
- to provide companies the best locations for their activities;



- to limit the risks that certain activities and pollution presents to residential neighborhoods.

Location policy of activities must take into account factors that companies are sensitive at, in their implantation process. These factors have changed considerably with the decline of heavy industry: they no longer seek for location in areas that have rail and inland waterways, but areas well served by roads (including goods are transported increasingly more in trucks) and to give a certain image of modernity and technological advancement enterprise. Therefore, in order to attract performant business implantations (stable, clean, efficient) the following incentives can be used:

- territorial marketing techniques for creating an image of the city;
- development of parks;
- cutting-down taxes.

For commercial activities, according to the western model, hypermarkets (large shopping centers provided with large parking spaces, located near or close to the center) can be created. For business centers we can instead build-up business districts, either in the central area (for example, the center station in Stockholm, Boston, Philadelphia, etc.) or the periphery, in the form of secondary centers (Newark in New York, Docklands London, Paris La Defense or Port-Dien in Lyon).

### **3.3. Making public equipment**

Public equipment includes:

- Equipment infrastructure: water supply, sewerage, heat, electricity supply, gas supply, sanitation, road network, collective arranged spaces (gardens, cemeteries, etc.)
- Equipment superstructure (building collective use): administrative, commercial, cultural, health, social, sports, leisure.

For equipment programming equipment grids are being used; they are listed in public directories depending on the size of population served. They may have a guidance role, but their use too rigid prevent adapting equipment to the real needs of the operation planning.

- We distinguish two types of public equipment according to the effect they have on space organization:
- Accompanying equipment (that only respond to the induced housing needs or activities);
- Structuring devices (for example, universities).

For example, we present the IAURIF grid (Institute of Urban Planning of Île-de-France) which sets occurrence thresholds of various categories of public equipment:

TABLE NO. 2. – OCCURRENCE THRESHOLDS OF VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF PUBLIC EQUIPMENT

| Number of houses | Number of inhabitants | Nature of equipment                | Ground surface per house in m <sup>2</sup> |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 300              | 1.000                 | Primary school and kinder-garden   | 12,6                                       |
| 1.000            | 3.500                 | Proximity Commercial center        | 4,0  |
| 1.000            | 3.500                 | Social center and baby consulting  | 1,24                                       |
| 1.400            | 5.000                 | Professional school (600 students) | 9,0  |
| 1.400            | 5.000                 | Library                            | 0,6  |
| 2.000            | 7.000                 | Play ground for children           | 0,5  |
| 2.800            | 10.000                | Nursery                            | 0,75                                       |
| 2.800            | 10.000                | Belief place                       | 0,70                                       |
| 4.600            | 16.000                | Specialized learning section       | 0,66                                       |
| 5.000            | 17.500                | Cinema                             | 0,40                                       |
| 5.800            | 20.000                | Children protection center         | 1,75                                       |
| 5.800            | 20.000                | Nursing home                       | 1,75                                       |
| 5.800            | 20.000                | Restaurant                         | 0,43                                       |
| 5.800            | 20.000                | County police                      | 0,43                                       |
| 6.500            | 23.000                | High-school                        | 1,92                                       |
| 7.000            | 25.000                | District shopping center           | 6,40                                       |
| 7.000            | 25.000                | District dispensary                | 0,25                                       |
| 8.500            | 30.000                | Police station                     | 0,07                                       |
| 8.500            | 30.000                | Economic high-school               | 1,04                                       |
| 10.000           | 35.000                | Police – central dispatch          | 0,70                                       |
| 10.000           | 35.000                | Firefighters                       | 0,17                                       |
| 15.000           | 50.000                | Industrial high-school             | 1,41                                       |
| 15.000           | 50.000                | Nouns for young workers            | 0,42                                       |
| 15.000           | 50.000                | Hospital                           | 5,90                                       |
| 15.000           | 50.000                | Theatre                            | 1,11                                       |
| 15.000           | 50.000                | Court                              | 0,07                                       |

- Outside equipment that can be called classical, two types of modern equipment deserve to be presented:
- Intelligent devices, that represent the fusion in the same urban space of more specific equipment, create a multifunctional space, that can be for example, a school, a youth culture house and a library.
- Equipment with multiple uses, whose prototype very well known, is Agora from Dronten (the Netherlands). Agora represents a multi-use central equipment whose roles are not predetermined. Agora's architecture is a large "umbrella", a large shed with simple forms that have some specialized jobs: restaurant, a small auditorium, space for meetings and conferences. But most of the space does not have a specific vocation: over days and even hours, this place serves successively as a vegetable market and ballroom, sports ground covered and framework for political meetings or union.

The main idea is that, before each use, residents must adapt this space, by building a frame or setting, assuming an active role to this equipment.

Quality of problem solving regarding the achievement of any public equipment depends largely on the owner's ability to judge the operation opportunity to test the feasibility and locate it in the best operating conditions, both socially and technically.

- Stability of a simple and precise program, which has to become during the conception process a practical reference document for partners, allows the owner to avoid frequent deviations between intentions and achievements.

In the programming and leading process of an operation:

- a methodology of the urban program must be settled, taking into account the actors and partners involved (owner, users, operators, performer);
- There must be made an achievement control of the major objectives proposed within the cost and executing terms compliance;
- It's important to introduce the notion of urban quality;
- It is necessary to give an operational project to the contractor, based on dialog, which should contain all the elements that this one needs, in order to make the project in best conditions without imposing architectural solutions (but answering to all architect's questions).

Local authorities must explain their objectives and control their investments, by programming operations yet before involving in the achievement of any building process and even before having the first contacts with the executers.

### **3.4. Urban transport planning**

The city needs transportation for distances which generally exceed 1km. Distance from which 50% of people refuse to walk, if they have a mean of transportation or one of their own, it's called refusal distance and depends on the movement reason, age and health, socio-professional category, climate and environmental beauty<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Some architects worked on the plans of a new city. Their offices were located in a small town situated in a beautiful mountain area and the restaurant was 250 m far, and could be reached by going on a quiet street lined gardens. After long working sessions that discuss giving priority to pedestrian movements within the city, half of the participants preferred to use their car to travel the 250 m, instead enjoy two walks of 5 minutes in a very pleasant frame.

The main objectives of transportation systems are the following:

- cutting distances;
- assuring passenger's comfort;
- achieving economical transports;
- minimizing pollution and accidents;
- serving all citizens.

A comparison between public transport and personal cars is clearly in favor of the first:

- Human aspects: even in cities with a high motorization rate, more than half of the population (children, senior citizens) depends on public transport.
- Economic aspects: on equal investigations, capacity offered by public transport, at peak hours (which determine the size of transport networks) is two (for cities over 500,000 inhabitants) up to 8 times (for cities with 10 million inhabitants) higher.
- Environmental issues: air pollution, noise and accident costs, are 10 times higher if traveling by car.
- Energy aspects: a trip by car consumes three to four times more energy / person than the train, subway, bus or tram.
- Spatial aspects: space consumption for a car travel is 10 to 20 times higher than for public transport.
- Urban issues: transport axes are the ones that are guiding the process. Public transport favors a dense urbanization around stations, while the car, provides access to any point in space, resulting a low density urbanization on large areas.

Consequently, public transport should be given priority. But priority doesn't mean exclusiveness.

The car remains a very convenient and quick transportation mean. Its use should be limited during peak hours, in the central areas and in situations where its cost to society becomes excessive.

To discourage travel by car in the central area it can be applied a policy of parking fees: high rates for long periods (discouraging those who come to work by car) and low rates for short periods (for those who come shopping, for business or walking) and for residents.

Transportation policy needs to take into account:

- a. *Infrastructure Policy.* Priority should be given in public transport, avoiding however, large investments: often a tram network is better than a subway line (investment being the same), especially in medium-sized cities.
- b. *Planning method of transport:* the analysis of actual mobility in order to understand current users behavior and the rules which govern it, predicting future demand, confronting its existing network to determine the additional infrastructure required, their classification according to their priority taking into account the economic, ecological , human, energy, and urban space aspects.
- c. *Policy action on the quality of transport services:* public transport frequency, correspondences convenience, comfort, diurnal amplitude (up to what time of the evening) and weekly (including Sunday) of services.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Urban management represents an effective way to guide urban development in the desired direction, generating a better communication between local authorities as a bidder and market groups, as a demand for urban products. For this, a number of conditions must be fulfilled (Profiroiu, 1998):

- urban marketing has to be a permanent element of city's management and to form the basis for local development policies;
- procedural thinking needs to make place to the conceptual thinking, and analytical planning to make place to strategic planning;
- private sector should be understood as an active ally/partner in urban development projects;
- administration needs to be reorganized to a more flexible offer and market oriented actions, and the public servant's attitude needs to be oriented towards the client.

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